

# Agenda Item 5

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 13 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**Statement from: Councillor M J Hill OBE, Leader of the Council**

### **FINANCE**

#### **Financial Statements and Outturn 2018/19**

This year was the second where Finance teams in Local Authorities across England have been required to have their Statement of Accounts completed and audited two months earlier than in recent times – the end of July rather than September. It was also the first year of new audit arrangements following a national procurement exercise which has seen our external auditor change from KPMG to Mazars. Whilst nationally the number of councils that have not been able to complete their accounts on time has increased markedly, I am pleased to confirm that our Finance team did meet the deadline with a clean bill of health at the Audit Committee meeting held on 22 July. Alongside this, Mazars also provided us with an unqualified Value for Money opinion which affirms our standing as a well-run council, something again which many others are struggling with.

#### **Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2019/20 – Monitoring Report**

The first budget monitoring report for the current financial year will be based on the position as at 31 August 2019. The report will be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 26 September and the comments of the Board will be presented to the Executive on 1 October 2019.

#### **Budget 2020 and Beyond**

Work is currently underway on identifying budget proposals covering up to the next three years. In line with my earlier statements, we have been working to the assumption of a £30m gap by the end of 2022/23. Services have been tasked with identifying 3% in efficiencies as well as some more targeted reviews to ensure we continue to provide excellent public services. I look forward to sharing our progress with all Members in more detail as we progress through the autumn. Following the Chancellor's Spending Round announcement, all eyes will be on individual council allocations and the expected Finance Settlement later in the year which should confirm these alongside referendum principles for Council Tax.

### **PROPERTY**

The Greater Lincolnshire One Public Estate (OPE) programme is delivering Asset Challenge workshops with other public authorities, continuing to drive integrated services and transformation and to identify surplus land to deliver housing and economic growth. Current projects funded by OPE include master planning in the West Street area of Boston, master planning of RAF Scampton and a feasibility study for the relocation of Lincoln Crown Court.

A letter has been received from Lord Agnew, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the school system, complimenting Lincolnshire County Council for its efficient work in delivering school pupil places. As a result, we have been asked by the DfE to provide peer support to less well performing authorities.

The transformational Special Needs programme is progressing well, with contractors appointed for the delivery of the first five schools. The new school at Boston John Fielding and the remodelling of Bourne Willoughby and Spilsby Eresby will be completed in 2021. When completed, the programme will ensure that all children with SEND in Lincolnshire will be able to go to their local SEND school.

Over the last twelve months, LCC has secured in excess of £2 million towards school pupil places from housing developers to assist the delivery of basic need throughout the county.

The construction of the new Blue Light Service Centre and Ambulance, Fire and Police Station at South Park in Lincoln is in the final stages. This building is the first of its type anywhere in the country. The first phase was handed over in July enabling East Midlands Ambulance Service and Fire and Rescue to become operational. Police will be operational in the autumn and the West Parade Police station will be closed.

The council's property services contract with VINCI is one of three contracts that have been shortlisted for the National Facilities Management Awards. The winner will be announced in November.

## **COMMERCIAL TEAM**

### **Project Management**

The team continues to support high priority projects within the Council:

- **The Blue Light Collaboration Programme** - has provided the first tri-service operational station in the country and in June the South Park campus became home to 45 fire-fighters and 72 ambulance staff. Police colleagues are due to move to the site in early autumn.
- **Corporate card payments** - have seen card payment devices and smart client software installed within Lincoln Registrar's office with the first card payment being taken on 1 July 2019. This technology is to be rolled out and operational within all Registrar offices by the end of the summer.
- **A new website/digital platform** - will provide a wide range of digital transactions, along with a new look and feel. It is on schedule for switch over to the live version in December 2019.
- **The first Extra Care Housing Scheme** - with capital funding of £2.8m was approved to commence development in October 2019. The development will provide a total of 70 units of accommodation, for a minimum 30 year period,

enabling choice for residents and revenue savings by providing an alternative to expensive residential care.

### **Highways**

The Commercial Team continues to work with colleagues in Economy and Place on the procurement of the Highways contracts (highways works, traffic signals and professional services and design). This large contract (circa £750 million) is being conducted as a Competitive Procedure with Negotiation (CPN) to secure the most commercially attractive solution.

This complex procurement has been conducted in accordance with the original timetable with a view to obtaining approval by October to award the contract, factoring in a 6 month mobilisation phase.

### **Electricity**

The Commercial Team has secured the Council's electricity provision for the next 4 years via the ESPO Energy Framework. The Council is expected to consume circa 23 million kilowatt hours per annum of green (100% renewable) electricity supply for the forthcoming contract year (Oct 19 – Sept 20).

### **Staff Benefits**

Working closely with Human Resources we now have in place a fully managed service for employee benefits. The contract brings together all the employee benefits schemes such as the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) covering wellbeing and including advice on mental health, smoking cessation, fitness and weight loss to legal and debt advice and stress management; retail and leisure benefits; cycle scheme and childcare voucher scheme into one portal. This has resulted in savings and a higher level of service provision.

### **Adult Skills and Family Learning**

Working with colleagues in Economy and Environment the Adult Skills and Family Learning Providers have been re-commissioned with grant funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), circa £1.4 million per annum. In line with the GLLEP, the service aims to improve the skill levels of people in our communities giving them new career opportunities and enabling local businesses to recruit talented employees.

The programme covers three themes:

- Employability and Skills (including ICT, first aid, Food Safety and others)
- Wellbeing programmes
- Improving outcomes for families

### **Integrated Lifestyle Service**

One You Lincolnshire, a new integrated healthy lifestyle service, commenced on 1 July 2019 to support residents to make positive long-term changes to their health.

The Council and the Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Groups have commissioned the healthy lifestyle provider, Thrive Tribe, to deliver the preventative health service providing eligible residents with free access to health coaches that will support them to stop smoking, drink less, eat well and move more.

### **Dementia Support Service**

The Council has re-commissioned its Dementia Support Service to support people with dementia to live at home for longer and live as well as possible by providing early help and support to help prevent crises, unscheduled hospital admissions and premature transition into long term residential care.

### **Shared Lives**

The new Shared Lives services went live on the 5th March this year with a new Provider, Person Shaped Services (PSS). PSS turns 100 in 2019 and has a rich history of innovation in the social care sector starting the first Shared Lives in Liverpool in the 1970s. Individuals are supported in a family setting within the Carers own home, providing access to their community and supporting the development of independence. The services provide long term, short breaks and sessional support for adults and children from the age of 16. The Shared Lives model is the fastest growing form of care in the country and we want Lincolnshire to be up there as a leading county with a minimum growth expectation of 20% set for the new contract.

### **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs)**

The Commercial Team have worked closely with all district authorities focusing on the procurement of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) works to reducing current timescales whilst delivering value for money. A Countywide DFG Contractor Framework has been set up covering work to a value of £6m per annum and involving 47 individual suppliers.

### **Specialist Targeted Employment Partnership (STEP)**

This new service offers structured support for service users with learning difficulties to explore and secure long term paid employment. The county-wide service, provided by Linkage, went live on 15 July 2019 and will run for a period of two years. Support will include help with CVs and interviews, training and workshops, matching the employer with the individual and career development plans along with the opportunity to experience paid work for a minimum of three weeks with the possibility of long term employment.

## **COLLABORATIVE WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS**

We continue to work with a wide range of partners to help to achieve the ambitions of the Council. The Local Authorities across Greater Lincolnshire continue to explore all opportunities for joint working where this would deliver improved services / greater efficiencies. The Waste Partnership is one area where we are accelerating our plans for greater collaboration as well as exploring opportunities for joint working in adoption services and tourism, as examples. Work to develop a Greater Lincolnshire Growth Strategy is progressing well with an expectation that we will engagement with others on a draft by the end of the year.

We are also working with Local Authorities across the East Midlands and are undertaking a functional economic market area analysis to support spatial and economic planning across the region. This will give us the evidence needed to support funding requests for major infrastructure projects in the future.

Integration across the health and care sector remains a priority and we are working with Health colleagues to establish an integrated care system, which is a requirement of the Department of Health's recently announced 10 Year Plan and intend to have this arrangement in place in shadow form by next April.

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